



Assembly Bill 590
Assembly Committee on Homeland Security and State Preparedness
400 NE. State Capitol
November 27, 2007

Representative Ballweg and committee members, thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 590. Juneau County Sheriff, Brent Oleson approached me several months ago, informing me that the conceal carry laws prevented military personnel on duty from leaving Volk Field with loaded weapons to patrol the area located on the other side of the fence that surrounds the perimeter of the base.

As you may be aware, Volk Field is subject to split jurisdiction, as part of the property is owned by the state, while the other part is owned by the federal government. Volk is used for a variety of training purposes, with focus on training of pilots. There is also a considerable amount of property stored on this particular base, and for that reason the base was contained on the list of military bases warranting high risk and additional funding for protection by Congress.

Much of the land base surrounding Volk Field is used as hunting or recreational land, with some areas having no roads or only dirt roads. The property outside the fence of Volk Field is primarily privately owned, with many residences on the base's southernmost border, including the Village of Camp Douglas, as well as other scattered residences.

Sheriff Oleson and the Juneau County Sheriff's Department employees are

~~unfortunately kept extraordinarily busy dealing with crime wholly unrelated to Volk Field.~~

Much of the area surrounding Volk Field, being recreational property, would be difficult to patrol; and the JCSD has no vehicle suited to accommodate patrolling these areas – which are private property. The military however, has vehicles and has trained individuals who are able to patrol the fence perimeter, but to patrol the exterior area – that outside the fence, these trained individuals would be obligated by law, to leave their weapons behind on base.

This bill -- AB 590 – is offered to accommodate the Sheriff's desire to ensure that the area outside the fence is scrutinized and patrolled regularly, as it allows the sheriff to deputize certain security officers who are employed by the Department of Military Affairs (DMA). By deputizing individuals who are employees of the military, loaded weapons may be carried with them outside the fenced area at Volk Field in order to perform the task of patrolling property that lies outside of the fence. DMA supports this change in the law, as officials understand there to be a need to assist local law enforcement with overall base security – which cannot be just from the inside out.

Under the bill Juneau County would essentially be held harmless, though the persons patrolling would be “deputies” of the Sheriff's department while engaged in this activity off base.

Assembly Bill 590 is a vital policy change. Patrolling the perimeter of Volk Field is a significant task and allowing military personnel to assist is beneficial to the health and welfare of area residents in addition to ensuring that property and training are not compromised.

Senator Schultz and I hope that you will understand the need to avoid delays and to move this bill forward. Know that Senator Sullivan has been contacted with the opportunity to consider becoming lead author of a Senate companion bill, and we await his response.

